

# ANGERED TO THE CORE



# Henry J. Allen and the U.S. Army

*by Robert H. Ferrell*

**T**he state of Kansas has produced more than its share of political leaders with ambitious reform agendas. Henry J. Allen announced one of the most ambitious in 1919 when after World War I he proposed reform of the U.S. Army. This proposition, one must add, was not as chimerical as it might seem in retrospect. It held the prospect of success: the time was right; and Allen advanced his proposal when the country had enjoyed twenty years of progressivism, as so many of the era's political leaders described their efforts. Reformers sought to bring American life into better proportions than in the past and to devote its politics to the betterment of everyone, as President Theodore Roosevelt said on any and all occasions. His successors offered their agreement. It was a time when it appeared as if God were in His heaven and from there presided over the United States. Many Americans believed that the vision of a city upon a hill, as John Winthrop set forth three centuries before, was on the verge of realization. In 1919 the need for action against the army seemed to Allen equally indisputable. He had just returned from France where he had headed the Young Men's Christian Association's work with the Thirty-fifth Division, a unit composed of ten thousand Kansas and eighteen thousand Missouri guardsmen. In France Allen had seen the division treated badly, appallingly so, by its regular army commanders, and he was angered to the core by what had happened.

If anyone could have managed the army's reform it was Henry Allen, an impressive individual by any measure. Born in Pennsylvania in 1868, he had "gone west," and Kansas soon became the scene of his triumphs. Like so many ambitious young men of his time he became a newspaper reporter, then an editor and publisher, and from there launched himself into a second career in politics. Allen was a small man, portly, bald, with an arched nose, a domed forehead. Unimpressive physically, he possessed other qualities. He was an excellent speaker; he knew how to make points in a time when the publicly spoken word had enormous currency, and he was quick on his feet; whatever he had to say he said it well, using words that came to the point and did not cycle around it.<sup>1</sup>

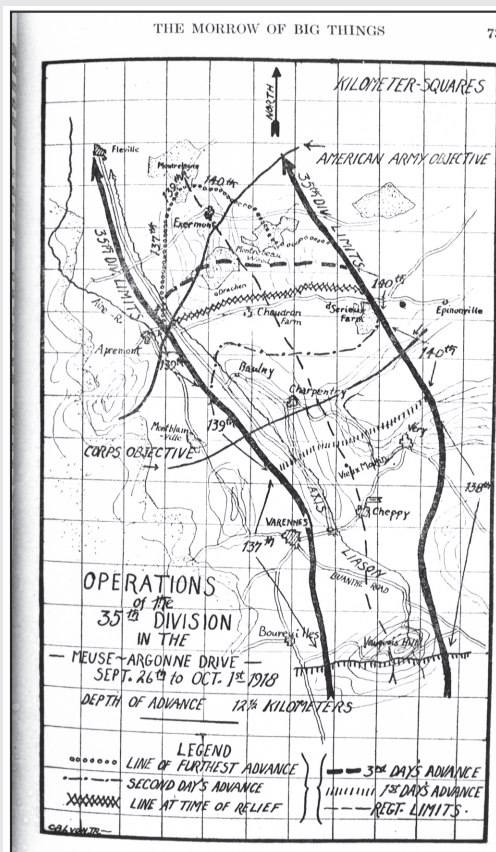
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1. Robert S. LaForte, *Leaders of Reform: Progressive Republicans in Kansas, 1900-1916* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1974); Homer E. Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990); A. Bower Sageser, *Joseph L. Bristow: Kansas Progressive* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1968). The gubernatorial papers of Henry J. Allen are in the Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society. Additional Allen papers are in the manuscript division of the Library of Congress.

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At left is a pen drawing of the Thirty-fifth Division's movements during its five days on the line in the Meuse-Argonne. During this time the division suffered in excess of six thousand casualties.

Unlike so many would-be reformers, Allen in 1919 was in a position to do something about his concerns with the conduct of America's military establishment. He was elected governor of Kansas in November 1918 and took office in Topeka on January 13, 1919. That very afternoon, at three o'clock, he moved into action. In an address at the municipal auditorium, Governor Allen spoke frankly, as was his wont, to a packed audience of wounded servicemen who had returned early from France, and to their assembled relatives and friends, who hung on every word the new governor had to say.<sup>2</sup>

In this address on army reform and in subsequent days and weeks, Governor Allen set out in detail what he had

2. The best source for Governor Allen's activities in Topeka and elsewhere is the voluminous newspaper clipping files in the Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society. See "35th Division," clippings, especially vol. 4; vols. 1-3 and 5 concern the division's units and its return to New York and thence to Kansas in April 1919. See also "Kansas National Guard" clippings, vol. 3, *ibid.*; *Inaugural Address Delivered by Governor Henry J. Allen, Topeka, Kansas, January 13, 1919*, in "Kansas State Governors Messages, vol. 3, 1897-1925," Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; "Poor Support to 35th Division," *Topeka State Journal*, January 13, 1919.

seen in France. As head of perhaps a dozen or so field men of the "Y" (YMCA) he had ranged around the Thirty-fifth Division and seen its regular army commanders' disdain for the men of the National Guard. For Allen and for most Americans the war had been a crusade against Imperial Germany, against Emperor William II and the emperor's uncaring military commanders. As Allen disliked Prussian militarism he disliked American militarism, epitomized by the regular army officers he observed in France. Allen knew that prior to 1917 the regular army officers often dealt with the dregs of humanity in the enlisted ranks. As a rule they had not encountered soldiers like the sturdy, intelligent men of the state of Kansas—patriots, who had not enlisted in the National Guard because they had nothing else to do or sought to escape poverty. That might have been the case for many men in the prewar army, men who often used whatever money they received every two weeks for an evening of drunken revelry. But it was not true for the typical doughboy of 1917-1918. In a July 1919 article in the *North American Review* the Kansas governor was eloquent in describing what perplexed these young men: the army's dependence on a hierarchical system of leadership.

"The professional army officer failed to realize that he was dealing with a different class of Americans than those who make up the regular army in days of peace," Allen wrote. "The army that went to France from the National Guard was a cross-section of whatever communities the unit came from."<sup>3</sup> In the Meuse-Argonne the governor had seen men ordered against German machine guns. It made no sense to him and only proved that a more democratic army would have summoned the talents of Kansans rather than denied their existence.

The regular army's calendar of errors, the governor said, was large and included the division's handling of the wounded. The division's sanitary corps did not have nearly enough equipment. It possessed only a few

3. See "West Point 'Prussian': Makes Stiff Snobs out of Democratic Youths, Says Henry Allen," *Kansas City Star*, July 8, 1919, excerpting Henry J. Allen, "Wanted—Army Reorganization," *North Atlantic Review* 210 (July 1919): 39-47.





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ambulances, motor and horse-drawn, far below the numbers needed, considering that casualties within the Thirty-fifth during its five days on the line in the Meuse-Argonne, September 26-30, 1918, numbered well over six thousand. The numbers of stretchers similarly were grossly inadequate. Men charged with moving the wounded from the front were reduced to carrying them physically, indescribably uncomfortable for men already in pain.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to lacking ambulances and stretchers, the army had failed to anticipate the poor road conditions in the Meuse-Argonne, which made it difficult to bring the wounded to treatment areas. The Germans had occupied the sector since 1914 and relied on narrow-gauge railroads, neglecting the meager road system. Route Nationale No.

46 was the only road of consequence, and the Thirty-fifth shared it with the neighboring Twenty-eighth Division. In preparation for the battle the army made little effort to repair the roads or construct new ones, its single engineer regiment created for that purpose arriving the night before the opening attack. Paving material was available at a dump near Neuville, but the regiment had only a few Mack trucks with which to transport it.

This is to say nothing of the two immense craters in the Route Nationale beyond Boureuilles, just above the line of attack. Retreating in haste from part of the sector in 1917, the French Army had blown a huge crater and either failed to tell the Americans of its presence—the Germans had left it there—or, having been informed, the Americans did nothing to fill it. At the time of the attack the enemy troops, for good measure, created another crater. The holes were no small affairs, being many yards wide and ten to fifteen deep. They momentarily required roundabouts, but the en-

4. Robert H. Ferrell, *Collapse at Meuse-Argonne: The Failure of the Missouri-Kansas Division* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 60-61.



emy complicated this construction task by mining the surrounding areas. For a day or two after the attack the Route Nationale was closed to traffic. Dozens, probably hundreds, of injured men died before they could reach aid stations or hospitals. Front-line areas were filled with wounded. The division psychologist, Captain Harry R. Hoffman of Chicago, in charge of the advanced triage, saw hundreds of wounded lying in the rain. After returning home, Hoffman wrote to Governor Allen. "Imagine the plight of our wounded," he reported.

There were 800 at the advance dressing station; 1,400 more at the triage, just back of the fighting lines. Some were legless; others armless; many with sides torn out by shrapnel. All, practically, were in direct pain. It was bitter cold. The mud was knee-deep. A half sleet, half rain was beating down mercilessly. And for 36 hours those 2,400 [2,200] men were compelled to lie there in the mud, unsheltered. We had neither litters on which to lay them, nor blankets to wrap around them.<sup>5</sup>

Allen's third point against the regular army was the Thirty-fifth Division's lack of artillery support for the attacking troops. World War I brought home to armies in the field a truth well known before the bulk of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) arrived in France during the spring and summer of 1918: attacking troops needed a sheet of artillery fire in front of them, a rolling barrage. In the several attacks of the Thirty-fifth Division—an initial attack on the morning of September 26, and daily morning attacks thereafter until September 30, with two attacks, morning and night, on September 27—barrages were needed, but as a rule artillery support was weak or nonexistent. As they tried to move forward the men of the Thirty-fifth were at the mercy of enemy machine gunners in shell holes, sometimes in concrete pillboxes, who waited to see the whites of their eyes.

The lack of artillery support was obvious to Allen as he moved around the Thirty-fifth Division during its time on the line. But Allen did not know how bad this lack of support really was. Had he known, he would have made an even stronger attack on the regular army in the person of the Thirty-fifth Division's artillery commander, Brigadier General Lucien G. Berry. Allen heard plenty about the machine-gun nests and related this information to the

people of Kansas. What he did not know was that General Berry did not allow the division's artillery regiments—he commanded three of them: two light regiments with three-inch guns, so-called French 75s, and one with heavy six-inch guns, 155s—to fire properly. Berry believed that anything more than two shells in the air per minute from a 75 would overheat the gun barrel, despite the fact that the gun's specifications stated it could fire up to thirty shells per minute. The general also did not use his heavy guns for barrage work, which he could have done. Instead, he employed them for targets of opportunity—firing by the map or guessing where the enemy was. In a large sector such as the Meuse-Argonne this meant Berry's artillery hit little or nothing with the 155s. It just dug holes, and if holes were made in roads, the artillery actually hindered troop movements. Colonel Conrad M. Lanza, chief of staff of artillery for the First Army, which comprised most of the divisions in the Meuse-Argonne, and all divisions for the first three weeks of the battle, made a detailed analysis of the Thirty-fifth's use of artillery. He excoriated Berry for stupidity, although, being a regular himself, he did not use that word.<sup>6</sup>

Beginning in January 1919 the governor of Kansas criticized officers of the regular army for a fourth delinquency: not arranging for sufficient air support for the Thirty-fifth Division. Here, however, Allen was somewhat off the mark. The air support problem was complicated, and the lack of support was in fair part the fault of the Wilson administration, which in the mobilization of American industry did not provide the AEF with the planes it needed. In 1917 the administration inaugurated a massive production program, but almost none of the resulting planes arrived in France in time to use at the front; the program was an abject failure. French industry produced most of the planes used by the AEF's air service, but it received only one-fourth of those needed. It is also true that the air service's commanders misused many of the planes they received. First Army's air commander at the front, Brigadier General William Mitchell, inaugurated a bombing campaign behind the German line that dropped, altogether, 139 tons on enemy targets. But what the divisions required was aerial spotting of enemy artillery and photographs of enemy strong points on which American artillery could range. They also needed protection from the air for each division's balloons, excellent tools for spotting and photography. Balloons, however, were filled with hydrogen and were easy for German fly-

5. Quotation in *ibid.*, 120, *see also* 40-41. "Allen's Charges Backed Up by Official Report," *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 31, 1919. The article's subtitle read "Capt. H. R. Hoffman, Who Handled First Aid Stations in Argonne Wood, Tells of Thirty-Fifth's Losses."

6. Memorandum, entry 1241, box 2, 35<sup>th</sup> Division historical, RG 120, National Archives, College Park, Md.

ers to set on fire with machine-gun bullets. Unfortunately, General Berry of the Thirty-fifth was against using planes for spotting and told the AEF's commander-in-chief, General John J. Pershing, on September 27 that planes were "no damn good." Berry had forgotten that sentiment by September 30 when the division had been defeated; by that time he was desperate for planes.<sup>7</sup>

Governor Allen's bill of particulars against the regular army included two other accusations. One was that the troops were not protected against the Meuse-Argonne's inclement weather. When rain commenced on September 27 (turning to half sleet, as Dr. Hoffman remarked) the troops were in summer uniforms. By command of their regular officers they also had gone into battle without overcoats and blankets, having piled them in dumps just before they went forward. Equally true was the fact that the men on the line did not have sufficient food. They had gone into battle without anything but field rations, which meant hardtack crackers and cans of beef. When those rations ran out they were to have been fed by the division's rolling kitchens, but they could not make it up the roads. The men managed somehow, many of them rifling the bodies of the dead, American and German.<sup>8</sup>

Allen's accusations taken together were telling, and he did not even mention the extraordinary action by the Thirty-fifth's regular commander, Major General Peter E. Traub. In a singular piece of misjudgment, Traub replaced virtually all of the division's senior officers just before the opening of the battle, ensuring the men would be under commanders they hardly knew. Traub had been appointed to command of the Thirty-fifth in mid-July 1918 after the division's popular regular commander, Major General William M. Wright, was relieved and transferred to corps command and then to the Eighty-ninth Division. General Traub had commanded a brigade in the Twenty-sixth Division that suffered a massive trench raid in March. He had been the responsible commander, but this West Point classmate of General Pershing found himself promoted to major general and assigned to the Thirty-fifth Division. Traub possessed virtually no administrative ability, and proof of this was his decision to replace almost all his principal commanders, save his artillery commander, General Berry, who was a prime candidate for replacement. Traub arbitrarily relieved Brigadier General Charles I. Martin, who commanded the Seventieth

Infantry Brigade. Martin, a longtime figure in the Kansas National Guard, was the state adjutant general both before and after the war. His relief appeared like discrimination against a National Guard officer.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, General Traub relieved Brigadier General Nathaniel F. McClure, commanding the Sixty-ninth Brigade. In their places he assigned two of his regimental colonels. This left vacancies in their regiments, and Traub elevated lieutenant colonels. The division's other two infantry regiments he gave to new commanders. Meanwhile General Berry replaced two of his three regimental artillery commanders. To make Traub's "housecleaning" complete, he appointed a new division chief of staff. These changes were of course exceedingly unwise. Command changes on all occasions were delicate and required time to prove themselves. This was the more so because of the size of infantry brigades and regiments in the AEF (eight thousand men in a brigade, four thousand in a regiment), which were twice that of such units in the other Allied armies and those of the German Army.

Governor Allen's initial move against the regulars, as mentioned, was his address to the wounded veterans and their relatives and friends on the afternoon of his inauguration. His second was to spread his message, not merely to Kansas but to Missouri. Before the Western Retail Implements, Vehicle and Hardware Association at the Century Theater in Kansas City, Allen challenged, "Let the War Department open its records and give full facts on the actions of the American war machine in France." He asked the visiting delegates at the theater not to construe his remarks as criticism of the administration, the War Department, or any branch of authority for the failure of the war machine to keep abreast of its manpower. The problem was the army system. The YMCA in France had been highly criticized, he admitted. "Candidly, the only consolation I could find in the face of such torrential criticism was to sit down and coolly compare the army system with the 'Y.'"<sup>10</sup>

His third resort was to take the issue to Washington by stirring the Kansas delegation in the House of Representatives and in particular Congressman Philip P. Campbell (Pittsburg, Republican) who was a member of the Rules

9. General Martin remained in France until after the Armistice and wrote guarded letters home to his wife. She immediately contacted the state adjutant general who very probably spoke with Governor Allen before the general arrived in the states. Upon Martin's return to Topeka, the adjutant immediately resigned, and the governor reappointed Martin. See Charles I. Martin and Lou-Ida Martin Collection, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

10. "Allen Demands War Probe," *Kansas City Star*, January 15, 1919.

7. Ferrell, *Collapse at Meuse-Argonne*, 65.

8. Some of their favorite foods were the large cookies often found on enemy dead. See Ferrell, *Collapse at Meuse-Argonne*, 20-21.

Committee. Campbell arranged for the committee to institute hearings on the mishandling of the Thirty-fifth Division. Simultaneously, Allen arranged, through Kansas's Senator Charles Curtis, for a hearing by the Senate Military Affairs Committee.<sup>11</sup>

Resorting to Washington was a forthright move, probably the correct one in Allen's campaign for regular army reform, but it also marked his initial miscalculation. He did not understand the operations of the nation's capital. He was attacking not merely the regular army but the Wilson administration in the person of Secretary of War Newton D. Baker. A close friend of the president, Baker had been Wilson's student in a public administration course at Johns Hopkins University when the latter was at Princeton University and teaching occasionally in nearby Baltimore. The student and the teacher ate at the same boardinghouse. Subsequently, Baker became a lawyer and moved to Cleveland where he assisted reform mayor Tom L. Johnson before becoming mayor himself. In 1913 President Wilson offered Baker the top job at the Department of the Interior, but he declined; his qualifications for the job were as good as those of other secretaries, but he did not want that post. In 1916 Baker accepted the Secretary of War position, for which he possessed no visible qualifications. Wilson appointed him because the then secretary, Lindley M. Garrison, sought departmental reforms that the president believed more than the country would support.

Like Wilson, Baker saw danger in the regular army reforms Governor Allen demanded; it was a challenge to his administrative assignments, and he took immediate steps to confront it. Secretary Baker and Army Chief of Staff General Peyton C. March sought at once to head off what they knew was a dangerous opponent. They asked House Committee on Rules chairman Edward W. Pou for permission to come immediately before the committee. Chairman Pou could do nothing, even if he wished, which is unclear, to avoid their request. Baker and March met with the committee in advance of other witnesses and gave their points of view.

11. Governor Allen had the support of Major General Leonard Wood, whom the Wilson administration had not permitted to take the Eighty-ninth Division to France. "The general most beloved by Kansas talked twenty snappy minutes to members of the house and senate, who held a joint session in his honor. In those twenty minutes he gave the influence of his private opinion to the statement of Gov. Henry J. Allen concerning the losses of the Thirty-fifth division at the battle of Argonne forest. . . 'I believe that everything Governor Allen said relative to the terrific losses of the Thirty-fifth are true.'" See "Gen. Wood Voices an Opinion that Allen is Correct," *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 23, 1919.



*In a singular piece of misjudgment, the Thirty-fifth's regular commander, Major General Peter E. Traub, replaced virtually all of the division's senior officers just before the opening of the battle, ensuring the men would be under commanders they hardly knew. One of the officers Traub arbitrarily relieved was Brigadier General Charles I. Martin (1871–1953), a longtime figure in the Kansas National Guard who commanded the Seventieth Infantry Brigade. Martin was the state adjutant general both before and after the war, and his relief appeared like discrimination against a Guard officer.*

The secretary of war was a skilled debater, like Governor Allen, and knew how to support a weak case. Baker was a Wilson loyalist who had faced down a similar crisis in late 1917 and early 1918 when mobilization under the War Department had come almost to a standstill, and Democratic senator George E. Chamberlain turned on the administration. In January 1919 Baker told the Rules Committee that in any large national and international enterprise such as a world war it was impossible to avoid difficulties and, according to the secretary, in the recent conflict the govern-



ment had done exceedingly well. Representative Campbell, a shrewd legislator, questioned the secretary sharply, but his time was limited due to other committee members' questions. The aggressively talking secretary denied everything Campbell said. Baker was not sufficiently conversant with military issues to avoid lapses, which the committee members did not grasp as they were equally unacquainted with military affairs. Baker did not know, for example, that the Thirty-fifth Division was part of I Corps; actually he did not even know if it was a division or a brigade. Hearing Baker's exposition—the secretary was a rapid speaker (225 words per minute), so much so that stenographers could hardly follow him—the committee may have sensed his sketchiness but let his explanations pass.<sup>12</sup>

At this opening session, after which weeks elapsed before the committee heard further witnesses, General March, supporting Secretary Baker, stated that in a world war commanders were of little importance and the men meant everything—an interesting comment from a general. Regardless, March offered the presence of a general in uniform, who during the war had received four stars, equal in rank to Pershing. His status was enough to underline Baker's vacuous but rapid-fire commentaries, and the House committee members were, quite simply, impressed.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequently, Allen made his appearance and was an able witness, giving his points of regular army deficiencies during the Meuse-Argonne campaign. He was quick-witted with questions and stayed on his points regardless of interruptions. Unfortunately, Major General Traub, who recently had been released from the Thirty-fifth Division, followed the governor. Whatever the reason for Traub's relief and early departure for the United States ahead of his division, he, nonetheless, was an impressive witness.<sup>14</sup> A careful reading of his remarks reveals their braggadocio and Traub's glancing explanation of his command, apologetic but carefully so for the Thirty-fifth's high casualties. One has the feeling that Traub knew he had failed personally and was seeking to defend the War Department with the hope it would forgive his own transgressions. After the war, like many commanders, Traub was reduced from his temporary rank of major general to colonel, but he soon

rose to brigadier general and eventually, before retirement, resumed the rank of major general.

The truth was that, despite trying, Allen could not achieve much more than a modest forum in the Rules Committee. His hope might have been with the Senate, a more formidable group, but here he encountered a kind of lassitude and indifference. Taking care with the well-known egos of the upper house, Allen tried hard to keep the hearing focused on his issue, the regular army's unsuitability in a democracy. As senators made foolish comments and drifted off the subject, the Kansas governor sought to bring them back. It was unprofitable work. No extant evidence in Allen's papers at the Kansas State Historical Society and at the Library of Congress indicates what must have been his dissatisfaction with the Senate hearing, which together with more of the pronouncements of General Traub, turned virtually into praise for the army and especially for the army's performance in the war. The sentiment of the Senate seemed to be that "after all, we won the war," and while true enough, it was beside the point.<sup>15</sup>

Disconcerted with taking his evidence to Washington, Governor Allen carried on as best he could through the spring and summer of 1919 and into 1920 and 1921. In the aftermath of the perhaps too quick concentration on Washington, Allen kept up the fight in Kansas.

At this juncture Governor Allen made another mistake. He turned his attentions to other issues. A good reformer, he always had another one in mind. It was a time of labor and industrial strife, when inflation spiraled almost out of control. During the war, labor had turned to unions, and employers increased wages without argument, but during the postwar inflation they resisted. The result was large national strikes. Governor Allen conceived of a Kansas Court of Industrial Relations that would assist in arbitrating labor-industry contentions, representing Kansans as "the party of the third part" rather than allow labor and capital to engage in industrial warfare. The longtime leader of the American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers, denounced Allen as a reformer who was naught but a reactionary. Allen debated Gompers in New York City where he bested the aging representative of organized labor.<sup>16</sup>

12. *Losses of Thirty-Fifth Division during the Argonne Battle*, Hearings Before the Committee on Rules, House of Representatives, January 24, 1919, 65th Cong., 3d sess., 1919 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 4-10.

13. *Ibid.*, February 19, 1919, 10-20.

14. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1919, 66; *The American Troops in the Battle of the Argonne Forest*, Hearing Before the Committee on Military Affairs, U.S. Senate, February 22, 1919, 65th Cong., 3d sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 33.

15. *Ibid.*, February 18, 22, 1919.

16. Domenico Gagliardo, "The Gompers-Allen Debate on the Kansas Industrial Court," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 3 (November 1934): 385-95; Henry J. Allen, *The Party of the Third Part* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1921). For more details of the debate, see *Gompers-Allen Debate* (New York: Dutton, 1920).



Colonel Conrad M. Lanza, chief of staff of artillery for the First Army, which comprised most of the divisions in the Meuse-Argonne, asserted in a paper presented at the 1921 convention of the American Historical Association that "everybody blundered" in 1918. "The Thirty-fifth Division [left] did not do well in the Meuse-Argonne," according to Lanza, and the colonel subsequently concluded that "Governor Allen chose to interpret this truth as an attack on the National Guard."

Although Allen's attention had shifted to other issues, the question of regular army reform did not disappear. Colonel Lanza appeared at a session of the annual convention of the American Historical Association in St. Louis in December 1921. Courageously, considering that he was still regular army, Lanza told his audience in a well-reported paper that in the recent war the army was in trouble. He concluded that "everybody blundered" in 1918.<sup>17</sup> He was reading from a remarkable analysis he had drawn up at the time, based on army records, but for technical reasons—his regular army status—he could not address the faults of the regulars, notably General Traub who was still in the army and headed back toward his major general rank. But General Berry had retired as a colonel, and Lanza gave him his due. In reality Lanza was an ally of Governor Allen and needed his support. The governor did not understand intra-regular politics, however, and saw Lanza as another enemy. Lanza remarked, incidentally, that the Thirty-fifth Division did not do well in the Meuse-Argonne, and Governor Allen chose to interpret this truth as an attack on the National Guard. He cited military writer Frederick Palmer's *America's Greatest Battle*, which was uncritical of the army. Palmer had been a member of General Pershing's staff, like Lanza had access to army records, but unlike Lanza chose not to be critical of what he had seen.<sup>18</sup>

17. "Col. Lanza Gives His Opinion on 'Fiasco' of 35th Division," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 30, 1921.

18. "Allen Flays Lanza for Attack on Thirty-Fifth," *Topeka Daily Capital*, December 31, 1921; Frederick Palmer, *America's Greatest Battle* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1919).

By the end of 1921 Governor Allen's campaign to reform the U.S. Army came to an end. It was an unsuccessful, if praiseworthy, effort to change an institution that in many ways needed it; an effort to update the institution and bring it into the Progressive Era for which Allen had so much respect and affection. Militarily, too, the regulars had not done well in the First World War. Governor Allen had seen enough with the Thirty-fifth Division to sense how unprepared the regular army was for the complexities of modern warfare in Europe, as opposed to handling garrison duties in the Philippine Islands or dealing with the primitive military capacities of General Pancho Villa in Mexico. Other divisions shared the Thirty-fifth's problems at the outset of the Meuse-Argonne offensive. It was only in the last stage of the battle, notably the First Army's fourth general attack opening on November 1 (the earlier attacks came on September 26, October 4, and October 14) that the army managed to bring itself together in a highly successful operation. It drove the German Army out of the sector by placing the four-track railroad at Sedan under shellfire, thus threatening the German's crucial supply line. The cost of the learning experience in France was borne by such divisions as the Thirty-fifth with its inept leadership and heavy casualties. The battle of the Meuse-Argonne not merely involved the most troops ever brought into a battle in all of American history (1.2 million men), but the highest number of casualties, twenty-six thousand men killed and tens of thousands wounded. It remains the country's deadliest battle, the next most costly being the Battle of





*Henry J. Allen, shown here on the deck of a ship with his friend William Allen White of Emporia upon their return from France in 1919, served two terms as governor of Kansas, January 1919 to January 1923, after his tour of duty with the American Red Cross.*

Okinawa in 1945 with thirteen thousand dead, one-third of them aboard offshore ships hit by kamikaze attacks.

Governor Allen was a man of large abilities, the sort of individual whom Kansans so often have brought into public office. He might have gone much farther than he did in his years of prominence. Allen was spoken of for the presidency, but in the fluid politics of the Republican Party in the 1920s, Senator Warren G. Harding and Governor Calvin Coolidge were thrust forward by chance circumstances. At the 1920 Republican Convention in Chicago, Harding's nomination occurred because two stronger candidates deadlocked. Coolidge was nominated by a tired delegation

after the mere mention of his name in a nomination speech. Unknown to the delegates, Harding was an ill man, suffering from high blood pressure, for which in those days there was no remedy. His vice presidential running mate was certain to become president. A movement had been afoot at Chicago to nominate Allen, but the Coolidge nomination preempted it.<sup>19</sup>

Henry J. Allen received a second term as governor (1921–1923). In 1929 Governor Clyde M. Reed appointed Allen to fill the seat of Senator Charles Curtis, who became vice president in the Hoover administration. Defeated for a full term in 1930 by the Democratic candidate, Allen turned his attention to his newspapers, especially the *Wichita Beacon*, at which he had considerable success. Allen had erected Kansas's tallest skyscraper in Wichita, a ten-story building that cost \$435,000, and arranged for a fine house for himself and his wife, designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Allen remained ac-

tive in Republican Party politics until his death in Wichita in 1950. [KH]

19. For more on the fluky nature of the Coolidge nomination, see Robert H. Ferrell, *The Presidency of Calvin Coolidge* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 15–16. W. G. Clugston, *Rascals in Democracy* (New York: R. R. Smith, 1940), 130–34, recounted that Allen's candidacy loss to Coolidge was the fault of Senator James Watson of Indiana. Allen led the forces favoring the presidential nomination of General Wood, which deadlocked with those of Governor Frank O. Lowden of Illinois. Thus, the Harding candidacy emerged. Governor Allen swung Wood votes to Harding, for which he received the support of Harding's manager, Harry M. Daugherty, for the vice presidential nomination. The arrangement, Allen thought, was that Senator Watson would nominate him, which the mercurial Watson failed to do.